Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0899TX-1 for Spring Branch Independant School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated a strong partnership between the local educational agencies in the district, SBISD and Kipp Houston Public Schools.. The partnership described will allow each of the agencies to draw on the strengths of the others in order to provide high quality services to all students. The plan described is replicable in other agencies. This proposal, which builds on the work of the assurance areas, focuses on a strong implementation and deep collaboration on strategies that change school culture, raise student achievement to college ready levels; deepen student learning, and increases equity for all students, while collecting, sharing and using student data to inform instruction.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has indicated that all students and schools will participate in the programming.

b. The applicant has provided a list of all schools that will participate in the grant programming.

c. The applicant has indicated the total number of participating students, 41,0666, and the participating students that come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and who are at risk.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has thoroughly described a plan whereby LEAS will be allowed to implement the components of this program with flexbility as necessary to meet the needs of the students. The plan describes a project , with supporting clear deliverables that support English Language Learners, increased college and career prep, increased technology, greater social and emotional supports, and increased accountabilty. The plan described will likely lead to meaningful reform to support district wide change for all of the schools involved through its focus on English language learner supports at all levels, college and career preparation activities for secondary students, blended learning technologies, expanded use of data and campus accountability standards, social emotional supports for teachers and students.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has submitted a through plan that is research based that is likely to result in improved student learning and performance.

a/b. The applicant has submitted a plan that will increase summative assesment scores and achievement gaps for all students using the STAAR Reading and Math Tests. The test will be phased in over a five year period with reasonable

c/d. The applicant has described a plan and included a timeline that will likely increase graduation rates and college enrollment rates in an achievable way for all students participating. The applicant has described a plan to increase rates on AP exams, and ACT/SAT exams.

e. The applicant has submitted a thorough plan that includes increased rates of postsecondary degrees attained. It is inferred that due to the preparation in college preparation with respect to college level courses, that the students will achieve the post secondary achievement rates.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has provided a thorough review of their individual successes with improving student learning outcomes, including that 83% of high school seniors took the SATs, and 93% of high school students were promoted to the next grade at the end of the school year. Each district has each indicated the level of success they have had with graduating over 75% of all students and an equally laudable percentage enrolling in college.

b. The applicant has adequately demonstrated their respective successes with their lowest achieving schools. While SBISD has indicated great success with their elementary and middle school, they did not fully demonstrate that they have had success in the high schools. While they did indicate that more students are enrolled in AP courses, they did not indicate how many were passing those exams.

c. The applicant has fully demonstrated that student performance data is available to student, parents and educators through their website, Facebook, Twitter, PInInterst and Youtube, and an upcoming mobile application. The applicant did not indicate that information will be disseminated to parents in a non-electronic medium.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant submits information to the Texas State rating system that includes detailed information for all instructional and support staff, instructional staff only, teachers only and non-personnel expenditures. The reports include detail information including average teacher salary by average teacher salary by years of experience, average salaries for teachers, professional support, campus administration/school leadership, and central administration.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated sufficient legal autonomy under the Texas state, legal and statutory and regulatory requirements to implement the ideals proposed including: the ability to hire principals, superintendents and other district wide positions. Under these systems, all partners, including the charter school have sufficient authority to implement the programs described in the proposal.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence that there is meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. The applicant has demonstrated at least 70% of the teachers from all partners are in support of the proposal through letters of support. Various stakeholders participated in the development of the proposal including principals, teachers, support staff, students, parents and business representatives, members of the mayor's office. The applicant indicated that their feedback was used to strengthen the proposal.

The applicant has included letters of support from parents and students, teachers and support staff, principals, mayors from the representatives cities, and community supporters.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants have provided a high quality plan that will address English Language needs, increase college and career prep programs, increased online learning platforms, increase data and accountability and greater social and emotional supports for students. The well thought out logic behind the proposal was a result of a series of strategic meetings between the partner agencies which focused on the needs and gaps of their respective LEAs. All partner districts are focused on improving college readiness, matriculation and persistence.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**15**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a thorough and well formulated plan to to implement a program that will improve student learning through personalized learning environments and support for individual students.

a1. Students in SBISD are engaged in daily advisory sessions in college and career preparation, which also includes college visits, fairs, college mentoring. Additionally, the students at KIPP academy are engulfed in a culture daily that models that college is the goal for every student.

aii. The applicant has described specific learning and developmental goals linked to college-career ready standards. These goals provide students with increased confidence and competence with respect to their learning.

aiii. The applicant has described an ambitious program whereby students will be exposed to various areas of interest through the use of local business leaders and touring various institutions around the state that have specific areas of interest, such as museums.

aiv. The applicant has described that some racial diversity exists with the classrooms of SBISD and that the KIPP schools are majority minority. However, the applicant has not described how the students will be exposed to other people with diverse backgrounds.

av. The applicant described a book that details the tenets of KIPP schools that help to foster resiliency and self determination. However, no information was included regarding SBISD in this regard.

Bi. The applicant describes a plan that brings together a complete picture of student strengths and weaknesses that will allow a team school officials, parents and the student to implement interventions and provide appropriate supports. Campus based teachers comprised of administrators, grade level counselors, teachers, parent and student meet to review the student's data and identify interventions.

bii. The applicant describes a comprehensive complement of options of educational environments whereby students can choose from various formats to receive educational services, including virtual/blended learning, evening classes, ect..

biii. The applicant has adequately described that the students receive high quality instructional content irrespective of the format with which they receive instruction.

bivA- The applicant has extensively described updated student data that is used to determine progress of college standards which includes district average scores, norm group averages, percentile ranks and individual transcript/credit reviews and students achievement data.

bivB - The applicant has described that the data collected from the various programs used including AEIS, Eduphoria, Skywayrd, and MUNIS is used to create individual learning recommendations for students.

c. Extensive training is offered to students and staff to ensure that they know how to access and interpret student achievement data so that may make productive use of these data. The applicant has provided a copy of the LEA professional development calendars.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**12**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The program described is unclear with respect to various criterion. Nevertheless, the areas that were described were well thought out and describes a plan that may have the potential to personalize the LEA learning environments to ensure that

students have the support necessary in order to graduate from high school college and career ready, if the other criterion were addressed.

ai. The applicant has demonstrated that all partners and LEAs in the consortium engage their staffs in training and in professional teams or communities that support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies. All training is undertaken with the intention of ensuring that all students graduate on time and ready for college. For example, teachers participate in 10-15 days per year of professional development related to their instructional levels and content areas.

aii. The applicant did not provide any evidence that they have adopted content and instruction in response to academic needs and interest of students.

aiii. The applicant comprehensively describes a multifaceted system whereby student achievement indicators are always being measured to determine student strengths and weaknesses.

aiv. The applicant fully describes a system whereby teacher effectiveness is measured by formative observations/walk throughs. Likewise, principals are assessed on nine performance indicators. The applicant does not indicate whether or not such feedback is offered frequently.

b1- The applicant indicated that the response to B1 is located in section C, however it was not possible to located Section C.

bii. The applicant has fully described a complete array of high quality learning resources that they will use with their students including college readiness exams, end of course assessments, and college placement and diagnostic exams in math, reading, writing and English as a second language.

biii. The applicant did not provide any evidence of this criterion.

c. i. The applicant has adequately indicated that they will use information from the teacher evaluation system for continuous improvement, but they did not provide any evidence of how they will do so.

cii. The applicant has not provided any information to describe the training systems that will be use to continuously improve school progress.

d. The applicant has adequately identified that there are no gaps in highly effective teachers in their respective schools comprising the full consortia.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan described is comprehensive in its design and potential to support the project implementation in all of the consortium LEAs.

a. The central offices of the respective partners are designed to provide support and services to all schools. District departments have been developed to be involved in oversight, management and implementation of the proposed plans.

b. Although most of the services offered are centralized through the district offices, the local schools have site based Campus Improvement Teams that meet to advise the principals on matters involving programming, planning and impleentation. The individual schools have direct control over budgeting, staffing decisions, and professional deveopent.

c. Students will be engaged in blended learning programs where they will exhibit mastery not based on seat time, but through the mastery of skills.

d. Students will be able to demonstrate mastery through in person instruction, standardized testing, class projects, experiments and portfolios.

e. The applicants propose a credible blended learning model will be used to assist students who have disabilities and are English language learners

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has described a limited plan with respect to individual LEA technical infrastructure.

a. The applicant has provided a thorough plan to ensure that students, parents, educators and other stakeholders will have access to tools and resources including online and in person opportunities for access.

b. The applicant has indicated that all of their buildings will have wi-fi available for students who wish to bring their own computers. However, it is unclear if any additional technical support will be offered to stakeholders.

c. The applicant has indicated that they will use a cloud based system to facilitate exporting of data for stakeholders. This cloud based system will sufficiently allow parents to export data for use in other electronic learning systems.

d. The applicant has not indicated that the LEAs currently use interoperable data systems, but do plan to do so if funded.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has described a well thought out plan for ongoing correction and amelioration during and after the grant period. The applicants has a highly structured strategy for monitoring, measuring and publicly sharing the outcomes of the project goals. All planned activities through the project will be monitored and evaluated through observations, surveys, and various evaluation methods. The proposed leadership team will use these evaluations to determine the extent to which the project weaknesses, problems, or concerns are addressed in a timely manner as the implementation proceeds. With the close monitoring and ongoing evaluation of activities described, it is expected that the project will have the opportunity to continuously improve. The applicant has provided an extensive table that outlines the major activities of the project's continuous improvement processes. All project implementation benchmarks/milestones/performance measures for the project period will be closely monitored to determine the extent to which they are achieved. All project directors will work with the consortium director to gather, input, provide updates to, and communicate with their immediate supervisors in order to provide updates, present data on performance measures, seek input on project direction, review progress toward project goals, and make adjustments to the implementation and evaluation of their site-based program components.

| **(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a well designed plan where the partners will connect on multiple levels frequently to share expectations and best practices. Additionally, semi annual feedback will be sought from parents, students and other stakeholders. The applicant provided a complete schedule of communication that will be observed throughout the funding cycle which will establish clear communication to complete project initiatives.

| **(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided well researched plans for the selection of the measures and how the measure will provide timely information for the increase of student achievement. The partners chosen performance measures are aligned with the RTTT guidelines. Performance measures include using a new testing system, Norm Referenced testing, student engagement surveys, and a system for measuring teacher and principal effectiveness based on value-added growth measures. Effective review plans are provided to improve upon the measures. The applicant has provided in excess of the 14 measures requested. The performance measures involve using the STARR testing system, Norm Referenced testing, the PSATs, student engagement surveys, and a system for measuring teacher and principal effectiveness based on value added growth measures. Each performance measure included well throughout rationales and achievable and ambitious target goals for the identified populations.

| **(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a well designed plan to evaluate the effectiveness of funded actives. The applicant has fully descried the data type and instruments that the collaborating evaluation team will use to evaluate each of the program core components throughout the project period.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a thorough and reasonable budget to support the project goals.

a. The applicant has adequately identified all funds that will support the project.

b. The costs associated with the project do not appear to be reasonable and apropropriate to support the goals of the proposal. The allocations to KIPP are disproportionate to the student population who will be served.

c. The applicant has provided a comprehensive description of all funds that that will be used to support the implementation of the proposal.

d. The applicant has adequately described that dual language programs, learning management systems and blended learning environments will be one time investments. Ongoing operational costs will be used for employment of dual language teachers, power and bandwidth to support additional users technological tools and costs of standardized testing. These budgetary decisions are reasonable for the project goals.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortia LEAs have reasonably indicated in their letters of support that the partner organizations intend to support one another, and have offered sufficient letters of support from local elected officials. However, the applicant has not provided any info that there will be financial support from other state or local organizations after the budget cycle for this granted has ended.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

1. The applicant has appropriately described the partnership with local LEAS that will form this consortium.The members of the consortia appropriately agree that they will service all students K-16. They have provided a plan whereby they will follow up with graduates of their schools to ensure college success to provide support counseling, academic support services, high school and college placement, summer internships and jobs, and career resource and placement.

2. The applicant comprehensively described 4 population-level desired results for students that are attainable and achievable, including that students will enter their senior year of high school with the understanding that high school graduation is not the end and explaining the impact on families of students matriculating into college.

3. a The applicant has described a thorough plan to track and measure students and indicators through surveys, focus groups and other interviews.

b. The applicant indicates a thorough plan to use the qualitative assesments to further target and allocate human, physical and financial resources in order to improve social, emotional, and academic supports for students and alumni.

c. The applicant indicates that they will train staff in SBISD in order to scale the model, however, it is unclear how this will be done in a large school district.

d. It is unclear how the applicant will improve results over time

4. The applicant didn't describe how they would integrate other services for participating students.

5. None of the criteria for this were answered.

6. The applicant indicated an ambitious and achievable goal of doubling the number of students obtaining a technical certificate or college degree over the next 5 years.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has adequately addressed the assurance areas. The applicant has provided a comprehensive timetable that outlines an incremental increase in students demonstrating increased social-emotional characteristics as measured by quantitative measures; an increase in student engagement, and an increase of students attaining a technical certificate or 2 year degree.

Total	210	175

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

A budget was not provided.

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0899TX-2 for Spring Branch Independant School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This is an excellently presented narrative that provides a compelling vision of reform. By combining the complementary strengths of two unique entities -- the Spring Branch Independent School District and KIPP (NOTE: unless specifically

indicated, the use of "KIPP" in the reviewer comments refers collectively to KIPP-Houston, Dallas Ft. Worth and San Antonio), Project **Ready, To and Through** presents an ambitious yet achievable approach to dramatically and specifically accelerate the improvement of student's high school completion rates through personalized learning in participating schools, scaling up a proven set of practices that closes the achievement gap, and that seeks to cross-embed a successful culture of achievement in predominantly low-income, high needs communities. The expansive SKY Partnership launched in January 2011 emphasizes a commitment to accelerating a transformational cultural change ensuring a commitment by every adult that every child will go through some form of higher education. The plan is exciting, exhibits tremendous thought in linking strategies to close the gap between available jobs in Texas and the inferior skills with which SBISD students are currently graduating, and paints a robust picture for an encompassing plan that meets both the spirit and intent of the four core educational assurance ares. However, the plan does not provide evidence that includes each of the foud core educational assurance areas. The plan addresses a strategy linked to preparing students for success in college and the workplace and describes an emphasis on the use of data. The narrative does not describe a plan for recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers nor is their any discussion for an approach to turn around low-achieving schools. Overall, an outstanding and powerful consortium.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)(a) The narrative presents a brief description of "several" planning meetings between leadership of SBISD and KIPP to determine gaps in current programs and services. These sessions identified the schools to be included in this project. However, the consortia described in (A)(1) indicated participation by YES charter management organization. The approach to implementation section is silent on any participation by YES suggesting a gap in the narrative. The narrative also fails to present sufficient detail regarding the process to select participating schools as required by the criterion or how eligibility requirements established by the project will be assured. Finally, the plan indicates an intention to include ALL of the students enrolled in SBISD, and a portion of schools from KIPP Houston, KIPP Dallas-Ft. Worth and KIPP San Antonio. This is certainly an ambitious target for student and school participation out of a District with 41,066 students and 77 schools.

(A)(2)(b) A full and comprehensive list of participating schools is provided consistent with the requirements of the criterion

(A)(2)(c) The application meets the requirements of the criterion by providing a complete break-down of student participation by sub-group.

NOTE: The application misplaced the demographic charts required of (A)(2) in section (A)(4) which is very confusing and distracts from the quality of the application.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides a plan that implies steps are contemplated to scale reform but then fails to be specific with regard to the elements involved. This prevents the plan from rising to the level of "high-quality" as required by the criterion. The elements within the five sections described support a framework that will help the District reach its outcome goals and improve student learning outcomes overall. At times, the application declares a fact but fails to provide any supporting evidence. For example, the statements about flexibility for participating schools to not have to adopt all elements in lockstep in **Ready, To and Through** is an excellent comment but there is no description of any process or language to define how this flexibility has been granted or built into the project. Another example of this shortcoming is that the plan mentions a goal of enhancing the social-emotional characteristic of "Grit" without explaining what this means beyond citing a document, Tough, 2012, that does not appear to be part of the application. It is not clear whether the term is to be simply accepted in this context by its definition or if it denotes a larger program.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan briefly describes a number of strategies in the narrative that are built around five primary components. Included in the application are a set of charts that amplify the specific activities, deliverables, lines of responsibility and timelines to support achieving the primary components. The application refers to an Appendix A however it is not possible to clearly identify within the accompanying information in the larger appendix nor does the application include a Table of Contents.

(A)(4)(a) The stated goals for improvement on performance on summative assessments are ambitious and the rate of growth over the grant period is reasonable.

(A)(4)(b) The goals for decreasing the achievement gap call for essentially cutting the gap in half across all sub-groups over the term of the grant which is ambitious and achievable.

(A)(4)(c) The growth in graduation rates for SBISD is generally ambitious and likely achievable across sub-groups except for one outlier. The target for the African American sub-group is 84.8% while the targets for all other sub-groups is 90% or higher.   While it is clear that the baseline graduation rate for African-American students is lower by almost 10% of the other sub-groups, the fact that its goal is the only one not in excess of 90% reduces the sense of ambition. The graduation rates presented for KIPP Houston are simply exceptional and indicate a rare example of what can be accomplished in America's schools.

(A)(4)(d) The targets for college enrollment growth in SBISD call for increases of between 6% and 15% across sub-groups. This is an inexplicably wide range among sub-groups and the rate of growth targeted fails to meet the expectation of an ambitious yet achievable standard.

(A)(4)(e) The plan indicates growth targets that double the rates of postsecondary degree attainment over the term of the project. This is absolutely an ambitious goal yet achievable based on the strategies and vision described in the plan.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is ample evidence in the statistical portfolio presented in the application to indicate SBISD and KIPP Houston have a strong record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. However, the reporting span is over an inconsistent timeframe. Some of the data are from the 2010-2011 school year, some of the data bullet points reach back to 2009 but the overall report does not cover a comprehensive record of success in the last four years as required by the criterion. The application does not provide any details with regard to the other two participating LEAs, KIPP Dallas-Ft. Worth or KIPP San Antonio.

(B)(1)(a) The narrative refers to Attachment B.1.1 and Attachment B1.2 in the Appendix but these are not labeled nor are they readily distinguished from among the large amount of supplemental information. The data included within the narrative support improved learning outcomes by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment. However, the application does not address closing the achievement gap at all.

(B)(1)(b) The application fails to indicate any link to the bulleted statistics with any of the District's or LEA's low-performing schools. Further, there is no discussion in the application specifically about the project's plan for low-performing schools as required by the criterion.

(B)(2)(c) The application indicates the presence of a website for SBISD that is accessible by students and parents to access a variety of student performance data with plans to expand this through a mobile application later this year. The application does not speak to what procedures are in place to make student performance data available to students and parents by consortia member KIPP. The emphasis on training low-income, minority parents on the interpretation and understanding of data is impressive but fails to link this work with sustained access to data beyond the nine-week course described.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Once again, the application refers to Attachment B.1.2 which is not locatable in the material provided. Further, the very brief narrative presented fails to provide evidence for the four elements of the criterion. The narrative describes how well the District is acknowledged by the State for financial management metrics which tell the public how well District's are doing financially but this does not in any way address what level of transparency exists in terms of LEA processes, practices or investments as required by the criterion. KIPP is not mentioned at all with regard to the four elements of this criterion.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a statement about how Districts are organized and governed in the State and how charter schools are

classified. But the narrative provides no evidence of successful conditions or sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments as contemplated in *Ready, To and Through.* It is not discussed at all.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicates that a wide array of stakeholders were engaged in reviewing the application and providing input. It is not possible to determine how meaningful the engagement of the various stakeholders has been from the information provided nor does the narrative provide the number of meetings or frequency of discussions that took place. The application refers to Attachment B.4.1 as evidence that at least 70% of teachers from SBISD and KIPP support the project but the available material only indicate full support of teachers from KIPP Houston, KIPP Dallas-Ft. Worth and KIPP San Antonio. Evidence of 70% teacher support from SBISD is not locatable in the material provided. The application states that "no project partner is bound by a collective bargaining agreement" but no further evidence for this is provided.

On the one hand, a letter is included where the Mayor of Houston declines to comment on the application but indicates the ten-day review period was afforded to her office. Later in the material is a letter from the Mayor of Houston speaking generally about education but also saying the Mayor is "committed to supporting SBISD and KIPP in this effort." Letters from other Mayors in the State are included and indicate their support of the application. Also included are enthusiastic letters from students, parents, KIPP board members, and a large number of principals and teachers.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan presents evidence that a high-quality analysis has been done in determining the applicant's current status consistent with the requirements of the criterion through a series of meetings among all participating LEAs that resulted in five themes encapsulating the core needs and gaps. These include supports for English-Language Learners, an emphasis on gaps in college and career preparation, a need for more 21st century technology, a deeper collaboration between KIPP's successful data and accountability systems to strengthen those systems within SBISD, and a need fro more and stronger social and emotional supports for participating students. The applicant makes a credible case for the five focus areas in which gaps exist that prevent a robust personalized learning environment for its students.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(a)(i) The application presents solid evidence that what students are learning is linked to the ultimate goal of being college-ready at graduation. KIPP has a credible, impressive culture for imbedding this objective in each student commencing at pre-K and throughout the student's academic journey. The narrative states that SBISD "strives every day to have students understand that what they are learning is the key to their present and future success" and presents a wide-array of strategies to support a college-ready culture particularly in secondary grades. But it is not clear that what the District's plans are for expanding personalized learning environments at all participating grade levels to ensure that all students are not only college-ready but also career-ready as required by the criterion.

(C)(a)(ii) The criterion requires evidence of a high-quality plan in which the applicant's approach is credibly presented. The application provides a chart that states several learning and development goals, all of which are consistent with the requirements of the criterion, but there is no explanation of the approach envisioned to achieve them. The plan also lacks substantial emphasis for how all grade levels of students participating in the *Ready, To and Through* project will be engaged.

(C)(a)(iii) The application presents a broad-stroke set of statements about how students at both SBISD and KIPP are offered opportunities to deepen their learning experiences through student exposure to many academic and career areas. However, the plan does not present evidence for the frequency of student engagement across the areas discussed nor does the plan indicate that all grade levels of participating students are included in grade-appropriate derivations of the strategies being utilized.

(C)(a)(iv) The application presents evidence of a high-degree of student cultural diversity, as required by the criterion, across the participating population including an emphasis by the District and KIPP to leverage local opportunities that deepen the level of student understanding in this area.

(C)(a)(v) The narrative discusses the acclaim garnered for a book related to the requirements of this criterion but does not present evidence that the content of the book described or any other strategy is planned to be leveraged and individualized in some way across all participating grade levels to meet the elements of the criterion.

(C)(b)(i) It is stated that personalized learning derived from student data analysis by educators and parents is a current priority of both KIPP and SBISD. However, the application's examples are weak in linking the efforts described in this section with the high-quality plan envisioned. The narrative refers to Odyssey Credit Recovery as a resource being made available for students without describing what this is, what grade levels would benefit or how this works. The narrative is incomplete in meeting the requirements of the criterion.

(C)(b)(ii) The narrative presents a variety of formats and environments for high-quality instruction including a strong assertion of technology-based strategies that generally support the requirements of the criterion. However, the narrative refers to options "listed on page 39" and there are no options on that page of the application. This inattention to detail greatly distracts from the quality of the application.

(C)(b)(iii) The criterion requires evidence of high-quality content aligned with college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements yet the narrative fails to present sufficient evidence to meet this. The narrative refers to the State's content requirements, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), but does not offer evidence or any description of how or if TEKS is linked to college- and career-ready standards. The criterion also requires evidence of digital learning content which is not addressed in the narrative.

(C)(b)(iv)(A) A large number of annual assessments across all grades are used by the District as well as KIPP in addition to a smaller number of semi-annual or more frequently administered assessments. It is not clear how ongoing and regular feedback from the data generated from these assessments will be used nor does an annual or even a few semi-annual assessments meet the definition of frequently updated student data to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.   The plan to integrate the more robust Northwest Evaluation Associations' Measure of Academic Progress into the Data and Accountability component of the project between SBISD and KIPP is indicative of a high-quality plan but the frequency of the data available from this effort is not fully explained in the narrative.

(C)(b)(iv)(B) The criterion requires evidence of ongoing and regular feedback for personalized learning recommendations. While the narrative provides an impressive list of data sources and programs including the development of a new data system by KIPP with the support of the Dell Foundation, evidence of a plan for *how* to use the data in support of personalized learning recommendations as required by the criterion are not described.

(C)(b)(v) The application fails to address this element of the criterion.

(C)(b)(c) The narrative describes a credible training schedule for staff, supported by a District calendar included in the appendix, and states that staff in turn provide training and support to students but provides no details to support this assertion.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	3

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a)(i) The application fails to provide evidence of a high-quality plan to meet the requirements of this criterion. Professional development day calendars, as mentioned in the narrative as a response to this criterion, are not sufficient evidence of how educators plan to support the implementation of personalized learning environments or strategies to meet each student's individual needs.

(C)(2)(a)(ii) The application does not meet the requirements of this criterion in that the narrative offers a definition of the existing SBISD Professional Development Staff Tracking System housed in Eduphoria Workshop but then fails to provide evidence of any high-quality plan to use the current system or modify it to adapt content and instruction in response to academic needs and interests. Evidence of a high-quality plan to implement instructional strategies that adapt content and instruction is not provided.

(C)(2)(a)(iii) The narrative provides a comprehensive array of grade-level appropriate metrics for assessing student progress toward college- and career-ready standards as well as college- and career-ready graduation requirements. This is an excellent and thoughtfully developed suite of metrics that will cover all student's participating in the project.

(C)(2)(a)(iv) The criterion requires evidence for how feedback generated from teacher and administrator evaluations will be used to improve teacher's and principal's practice effectiveness, including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness. While the narrative does describe the existing teacher and principal evaluation systems, it fails to demonstrate any frequency in obtaining feedback beyond annual reviews and does not offer any descriptive plan for what would be improved in this process through *Ready, To and Through.*

(C)(2)(b)(i) The application fails to discuss what specific and actionable information would be derived to help educators identify optimal learning approaches as required by the criterion.

(C)(2)(b)(ii) The plan does not provide evidence of the availability of high-quality learning resources and tools as required by the criterion. The narrative states that evidence is referenced on "page 63" of the application however this page only lists available assessments.

(C)(2)(b)(iii) This element of the criterion is not addressed at all in the application.

(C)(2)(c)(i) Other than briefly referencing how the teacher evaluation system is to be expanded to include student achievement as a metric, no description is provided to support how information would be used to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness as required by the criterion.

(C)(2)(c)(ii) The application's evidence in this section is not coherent and does not substantiate the assertions within. For example, the narrative states that the District has already contracted with Education Value-added Assessment System to gather baseline data for a new metric system for a rigorous new accountability system including a new indicator to measure student engagement. But the criterion requires evidence of training, systems and practices to continuously improve school progress. Absent any explanatory language specific to the criterion, the application fails to meet what is required.

(C)(2)(d) The narrative offers a two-sentence response that fails to rise to the level of a high-quality plan as required by the criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)(a) The quality of the team organized to support the project is impressive and includes a deep cross-representation of the District's leadership. The project director seems to be highly-qualified particularly with the benefit of rich college-based experience appropriate for a project of this kind. The organization of the District's support structure is further defined in the organizational charts found in the appendix. The broad participation described for the District's organizational approach is not as fully described in the narrative with rearguard to KIPP as only a grants officer and two development directors are indicated as participating to support participating schools. However, the organizational chart for KIPP provided in the appendix suggests a deeper level of organizational support.

(D)(1)(b)   The application provides thorough evidence of sufficient flexibility and autonomy for school leadership over schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets - all elements required by the criterion. This evidence is provided in detail for both the District and KIPP.

(D)(1)(c) Evidence is provided for current capacity at each *Ready, To and Through* partner school for students to have access and the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery in a variety of ways and meets the requirements of the criterion. The application cites student enrollment in asynchronous/online programs like Odyssey Credit Recovery and access to the Texas Virtual School Network as existing opportunities for participating students.

(D)(1)(d) The application provides evidence that meets the criterion through a large number multiple times for students to demonstrate mastery and in multiple comparable ways. This is accomplished through online courses, writing and sharing essays, uploading work products, the opportunity to attend courses at the Houston Community College System on SBISD property among other opportunities.

(D)(1)(e) The narrative primarily addresses available indicators through the project's Data and Accountability component and references a commitment by the project to 21st century technology without ever specifically addressing what learning resources and instructional practices are available and adaptable to all students as required by the criterion.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2)(a) The application presents a solid description of existing infrastructure supports in the District and KIPP for students, parents and educators consistent with what is required by the criterion. The application also demonstrates a high-quality plan to significantly expand these resources, consistent with the four core educational reform areas, to students, parents, and educators. The narrative does not provide evidence of inclusion of these resources by other stakeholders nor does it amplify any strategy to ensure income is not a barrier to access.

(D)(2)(b) The narrative addresses a minimal amount of existing technical support within the District for students and references that KIPP maintains its own IT support personnel for all stakeholders without describing who is included as stakeholders. Available technical support nor a plan to provide this support is not described for stakeholders and parents with regard to the District.

(D)(2)(c) The plan calls for the purchase and implementation of a cloud-based high-powered learning management system (LMS) as part of the plan for the project. However, the narrative does not sufficiently describe the how the anticipated features of the LMS will specifically meet the elements required in the criterion and only states that the system will allow export in open data formats without offering a vision or timeframe for how this will assist parents and students.

(D)(2)(d) The plan indicates a weakness in that there is currently limited interoperability between existing systems and simply offers a statement that "district leaders will explore the feasibility of improving interoperability of data systems." More detail is necessary to demonstrate a high-quality plan to meet the criterion requirement that LEA and school infrastructure supports will be in place to ensure interoperable data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application presents a high-quality plan for an effective, dynamic continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on progress as required by the criterion. The initial weekly feedback loop for the first six months of the project by the Project Leadership Team demonstrates a strong commitment to close and careful oversight of the project and a credible process to generate information for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. Weekly monitoring by the Consortium Director, annual and semi-annual data analysis procedures, and both quarterly and annual comprehensive reporting to the larger stakeholder community all contribute to a comprehensive plan.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application presents a high-quality, comprehensive plan for weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual ongoing communication among participating LEA teams as well as strategies for consistent engagement with internal and external stakeholders as required by the criterion. The plan is thorough and detailed in how it intends to identify adjustments and revisions from the Project Leadership Team's monthly meetings to quarterly meetings between the Project Directors and Consortium Director and through weekly planning periods and project periods.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan's primary emphasis is on completion rates in post secondary education as the most critical performance measure but then goes on to describe eighteen performance measures which exceeds the total number of 12-14 recommended in the criterion. The plan contemplates a variety of highly innovative measures like the Grit Scale, the Tripod student survey in middle and high schools, and the Education Value-Added Assessment System that are thoroughly and coherently described. The narrative demonstrates a complete and credible approach consistent with the requirements of the criterion except for exceeding the total number of metrics allowed. Further, as required by the criterion, the plan fully explains the rationale for selecting each measure, and how the measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information. While the narrative is fulsome in every aspect, it fails to fully address plans to review and improve the measures over time. Overall, this is one of the most well-presented and cogent narrative sections in the application.

The application's aggregate number of performance measure goals exceeds the total allowed. For each measure identified,

the plan provides the detailed charts as required by the criterion. In a few instances, as in the data available for effective principals and teachers, the performance goals are not provided. In the balance of the performance measures, the targets are inconsistently ambitious yet achievable. For example, the target goals for students on track to college- and career-readiness include increase from 4.9% to 70% for LEP students, 4.3% to 55.3% for Special Education students and an increase from 18% to 70% for Economically Disadvantaged students. This is an excessively ambitious goal. Yet the targets for reducing the gap between comparison groups and sub-populations on EXPLORE College Readiness scores in mathematics and reading are not as ambitious showing anticipated gains in the range of 10% over the term of the project.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application presents a thoughtful and comprehensive plan for evaluating the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funded activities across five areas, consistent with the elements required in the criterion: English-Language Learner Supports, College and Career Preparation, 21st Century Technology, Data and Accountability, and Social and Emotional Supports. Each area utilizes a system of both qualitative and quantitative approaches like program staff and teacher reports, student enrollment, participation and persistence in the dual-language program, Administrator observations, counselor reports, college-ready graduation data in Mathematics and English, data access logs and student matriculation and persistence data among many others.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicates that the only funds utilized to support the project will be those that are secured under the Race to the Top - District grant. The budget presented is generally reasonable on a sub-project basis for the identified objectives in the *Ready, To and Through* plan. However, in the aggregate, the amount of funds requested for the 34,591 students in SBISD is $15,914,141 while the amount requested for the 6,475 student participants from KIPP Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth and San Antonio is $20,219,902 which is not reasonable or appropriate given the ratio of dollars requested for the number of students impacted. The rationale for this significant discrepancy is not explained. In sum, the coherence of the budget presentation is lacking.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicates where the participating LEAs intend to secure funds to sustain the project's goals beyond the term of the grant but fails to present a high-quality plan for how to successfully obtain these funds. The plan does not provide evidence of support from State and local government leaders nor financial support. The plan does not include a budget for post-grant sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) The application provides a well-written description of existing coherent and sustainable partnerships, primarily through participating LEA KIPP Houston and its KIPP Through College (KTC) program. KTC has a large number of impressive, ongoing partnerships with postsecondary institutions throughout the country. The plan also articulates a strategy to enhance

KTC with additional grant resources being deployed through Communities in Schools, a well-respected national social service provider, as well as in creating new partnerships with America's Graduate: Let's Make It Happen, America's Promise Alliance, Corporation for National and Community Service, and the United Negro College Fund. The rationale for these partnerships, how they intend to integrate with one another, and how they will work to support the overall plan is described in a credible, coherent manner.

(2) The plan describes four areas for population-level desired results that are aligned with the broader proposal and include both educational and non-educational results as required by the criterion.

(3) The plan does not meet the requirements of the criterion as the narrative fails to address any of the elements required to track the selected indicators, how data would be utilized to target resources, develop a scalable model, or improve results over time.

(4) The plan addresses which LEA would be responsible for integrating education and other services but does not describe how this would be done as required by the criterion.

(5) The plan does not specifically address how it would build capacity of staff in participating schools.

(6) The plan identifies mildly ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level that range from 10% growth over the term of the grant for Tripod survey scores, to 5% incremental growth on the GRIT scale though no baseline is available, and 2% incremental growth in the increase of students persisting in attaining some level of post-secondary certificate or degree.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

There are moments of brilliance within the plan that excite the possibilities but the general coherence and consistent quality of the plan is uneven. The brilliance is in the collaborative vision between the three KIPP LEAs and SBISD to enhance strengths among all of the LEAs and to consistently learn from one another across the term of the grant. The detailed analysis of existing gaps and the elaborate explanation for how these will be met through a successful application are reflective of quality thought and deliberation. The challenges within the application which contribute to inconsistency in quality throughout are in areas like failing to elaborate at all with regard to how flexibility and autonomy will be assured to support the successful implementation of the plan and in failing to include evidence that 70% of SBISD teachers support the project. The lack of a clearly labeled appendix that is aligned with references within the narrative also significantly diminishes the impact of the high-quality nature of the plan. However, overall, the plan does address each of the four core educational assurance areas and is focused on the creation of personalized learning strategies targeted on college- and career-ready standards and graduation rates. Therefore, the plan does meet the required elements of Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	110

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0899TX-3 for Spring Branch Independant School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal laid out a lofty plan for the SBISD and the three KIPP LEAs (Houston, San Antonio and Dallas municipality areas) forming this consortium to work together to improve student college and career readiness, graduation rates, and postsecondary success.

In regard to the four core educational assurance areas, throughout this proposal, the focus was on the fact that the teachers and principals are already effective or highly effective, although no data was provided to support this claim; and data provided in the proposal did not support the identification of low-achieving schools as assessment results were grouped together by district and no individual schools were identified as being high need.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The process of planning for the grant application was briefly described in the application, including meeting with key staff from each LEA, to determine that the identified goals and programs would impact students at each of their school sites. Details of how the discussion led to all schools being identified to participate were lacking. Information regarding low income and high-need students in each of the schools in each of the LEAs was detailed in the school demographics data charts.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified including all school sites in each participating LEA, creating 100% participation in the grant across the consortium. FAQ E-1 states that the applicant does not need to provide a high quality plan to address reform beyond the participating school sites when this is the case.

The consortium plans for the grant to provide academic improvement for students across PreK-12th grade in the areas of English-Language Learner Supports, College and Career Prep, 21st Century technology, Data and Accountability, and Social and Emotional Supports. Their combined plan is laid out in a high-quality plan detailing the activities, deliverables and timelines, as well as persons responsible for the implementation. The goals vary by grade span in each goal area, but some aspect of the grant proposal will touch students in each grade across the participating schools.

The inclusion of all students in the consortium participating in the grant activities aimed at increasing access to career and college ready standards led to the score point indicated.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The data provided in the application for each of these areas is inadequate due to the fact that the data was reported with grade levels and schools grouped together. This has the potential of masking both high and low rates for proficiency, graduation, and college enrollment.

The goals for each area are specified for a five year period, but none of the five year goals seem to meet the intent of being ambitious:

- The performance goals for annual assessments are set only at 70% for each group except for white, which is set at 90% for math and 94% for reading;
- The goals for reducing the achievement gaps so not appear to be ambitious enough, with the five year goals only reducing the gap to approximately 20%. While this represents a significant difference from where the gaps exist currently, it still represents a significant difference between subgroups;
- The goals set for graduation rates over the five year period so not appear to be ambitious enough. An example is that the overall KIPP Houston LEA's graduation rate goal dropping from the current 98% to 97%.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Raw data was provided to address each LEA's track record of success, but the data is vague in addressing the specifics of (a), (b) and (c) in the application detail. It was stated that the KIPP LEAs' data is national for their system of schools due to space limitation, however, no space limitations were imposed in this application.

No specific information was given about closing achievement gaps except for a general statement about the KIPP LEAs' schools nationally having a greater college completion rate than the national average with low income and minority students.

Data for each LEA was listed to highlight achievement success, but there was no reference to scores in specific low-performing, or lowest-achieving, schools, and no discussion of specific ambitious and significant reforms undertaken to improve student achievement at specific sites.

SBISD has an online tool for accessing student data, but no mention of such a program for the KIPP LEAs' school websites was discussed.

The deficiencies noted in the data and explanations provided for each sub-criteria of this section led to the point score indicated.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Two Texas Education Agency (TEA) systems are referenced to document the transparency of the required information. The School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (School FIRST) provides financial management performance information. The TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) provides specific expenditure information as requested in the application. Two websites are listed for the School FIRST information, presumably making this information available to stakeholders.

The narrative states that the AEIS information is available, although it is not clear whether the information is available to the district or the stakeholders. Attachment B.1.2 is listed in the narrative as containing the reports referenced to provide the personnel salary information in (a)-(d), but this information could not be located in the application.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

All of the LEAs included in the consortium are authorized to operate under Texas law. The KIPP LEAs are charter schools, inherently operating with more flexibility than a traditional school district. The narrative provides an overview of the laws governing charter schools, granting them the authority to operate, and the authority of the SBISD to operate the district.

No evidence was cited to support the LEAs' past efforts at implementing large reforms within the confines of Texas education law to support their autonomy.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative outlined meetings and forums held with a variety of stakeholders during the development of the plan. Documentation was provided in the form of e-mail and survey results of the discussions held at district schools. Documentation was lacking to support the involvement of parents and other stakeholders in the development of the plan. Evidence of support from teachers was included in the form of signature sheets, survey results, and letters of support, although the teacher support is overwhelmingly from the KIPP LEAs, and does not significantly represent support from the SBISD teachers. The survey results included some areas of concern or questions about the proposal from teachers, but overall the proposal was rated "favorable" or "very favorable" by the teachers who provided feedback. Representatives from area teacher professional groups chose not to respond to the application proposal.

Numerous letters of support were included with the application. These include conflicting letters of "decline to comment" and letters of support from two urban mayors from Houston and San Antonio, as well as letters of support from the mayor of Dallas and other smaller cities whose children are served by the LEA schools. The letters of support included some from parents

addressing their support for the Dual Language program in the district as well as some young children expressing support for the same program. Middle school students also wrote to express support for blended learning. Support was also expressed by partners in the process. Letters of support from higher education, business and civic groups were not included.

Weighing the elements that were included for the criteria in this section with the lack of data and evidence for some of the sub-criteria led to the point value assigned.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan was included addressing five components identified by the consortium to accomplish their goals for this proposal. The plan addressed the components of: English-language learner supports, college and career preparation, 21st Century Technology, Data and Accountability, and Social and Emotional Supports. While a high-quality plan was included for the overall proposal, there was not a high-quality plan to address the LEAs' needs based on their current status for implementation of the proposal. This section outlined what is needed to bring each LEA up to the level of being ready to implement the proposal, but a high-quality plan, as required here, would have included detailed goals and activities, along with the deliverables associated with each, the timeline necessary for implementation, and the personnel responsible for each portion of the plan.

The lack of a high-quality plan as required in the application led to the point value awarded.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative stated that students will be working to master college and career ready standards through the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through their coursework. Five program components were identified for the Race to the Top proposal: English language learner supports, college and career preparation, 21st century technology, data and accountability, and social and emotional supports. These were addressed in varying degrees of detail in the narrative.

A wide variety of assessments were listed to use for monitoring of student achievement and as a basis for feedback with parents and students. The majority of assessments included were standardized assessments with the frequency of administration set as "annually." The number of these assessments will provide multiple data points to be used to determine students' progress toward reaching the standards and their goals. Discussion and examples of less formal/formative assessments was not included in detail.

Encouragement will be provided for students to aim for college/post-secondary education, and tools will be made available to the students to assist the students and their families with the process.

Insufficient detail was given for personalization of education across these components. Some areas highlighting personalization, including programs such as mentorship, one on one tutoring and Response to Intervention support, sound as if they are already in place and are not new under the Race to the Top Proposal, and while mentioned in the narrative, these components are not explained in enough detail to support the scope of the program.

English Language Learner Support and 21st Century Technology components of the plan were highlighted to provide online and blended learning formats for students, which could improve access and personalization for participating students.

Personalization was also addressed through technology through a program allowing students to use their own technology devices in their Wi-Fi enabled school buildings, but no mention was made of improving student access to technology through the grant, especially for students who do not have their own devices. The narrative explained briefly that students and parents will be supported in learning how to use the appropriate tools and resources as they are included in the instructional environment.

Discussion was lacking in the proposal regarding accommodations and strategies for high-need students to help them take advantage of the personalized learning environments proposed in the application.

Looking at C1 as a whole, one had to consider the factors that were included and thoroughly discussed along with those that

were omitted or not discussed in enough detail, and balancing this information led to the point value assigned.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Teachers in the schools of each LEA are involved in orientation upon hiring and professional learning communities during their tenure. Days are provided each year for teachers to continue their professional development, and teachers also have access to online PD support, which will be expanded through the grant. Information was vague regarding how this professional development will focus on accelerating student learning, adapting content and instruction, and providing personalization for students.

Teachers have multiple forms of student assessment data to use to make instructional decisions, and the district is implementing a more rigorous accountability system next year focusing on progress toward being ready for higher education. Teachers will also have access to tools and resources required to implement portions of the grant in order to assist students with personalized learning. Little detail was provided in the application about how teachers will be prepared to use, and instruct students, with the new resources.

It was mentioned that none of the LEAs in the consortium need to focus on recruiting or retaining teaching talent as "no significant gaps in the number of highly effective teachers" exist, but data was no provided to support this statement. This is a major emphasis of this section, requiring a high quality plan to outline how this number will be increased, including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties, but this information was not provided as the proposal stated that it is not an area needs to be addressed.

The teacher evaluation system is being developed to include more information related to student achievement. This process has not yet been completed, and is an area that some teachers asked about in the feedback given during the proposal development process.

Balancing the components of this complex requirement that were included and well defined with those that were not addressed fully, especially the lack of a high-quality plan for increasing access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals as required in section (d), led to the point value assigned.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Specific personnel in each LEA were identified to be involved in the implementation and oversight of the Race to the Top plan. While district operations were described as centralized to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, each school site has a Campus Improvement Team, which is a site-based decision making committee. The narrative explains that each campus within each LEA has the flexibility to make decisions regarding their schedule and grading periods, and cited examples of SBISD campuses that have opted in the past to change the school calendar and the school day.

Options are in place for students to be able to recover credit as needed, and also to be able to earn high school credit based on mastery through online programs instead of traditional coursework at their campus. Multiple forms of mastery were provided in the narrative, including dual credit courses and online courses, but it was not clear whether students are able to progress through traditional courses using a variety of methods of mastery, or whether these options are mainly for credit recovery.

Learning resources will be available to students through online and blended learning, making accessibility to content more flexible for students. Sub-criteria (e) in this section was not addressed in the narrative with enough detail to support that the resources and practices would be adaptable and accessible for all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners. The proposal discussed assessment opportunities to be sure that data was collected regarding their progress, but the application was lacking detail in this area.

Balancing the aspects that were included along with the detail and components that needed to be more fully developed led to the point value assigned.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application included charts referencing the stakeholders who will be impacted by different components of the Race to the Top proposal and how access will be available to each. While technology for the 21st century was a focus of the grant proposal, the application did not address how participating students and parents will be impacted, regardless of their income level. Blended learning and online access is planned, but only the ability of students to use their own devices to access the resources was discussed.

The LEAs have different current level of technology support. The KIPP LEAs employ Instructional Technology (IT) support personnel to assist all stakeholders with access and to maintain the technology used in the schools. SBISD encourages use of personal devices with Wi-Fi enabled school buildings and providing personal e-mail addresses. Balancing this support across the LEAs will be important to support teachers, students and administrators with the grant implementation.

The LEAs in the consortium will continue to address the requirements of (c) within the grant period, using grant funds, to make the information available to parents and students. They district will also continue to work to improve the interoperability of technological systems for its stakeholders.

These points are addressed in the application, but a high quality plan was not included addressing goals, activities, timelines, responsible parties, and deliverables in order to implement these requirements.

While some of the sub-criteria areas in this section were addressed, the lack of a high-quality plan and the differences between technological access and support between each LEA in the consortium led to the point value assigned.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium is planning to hire four program directors, one for the SBISD and one for each KIPP LEA in each of the three different location cities. Having a program director on site, or in the geographic area, provides a strong component for support to the principals and teachers; however, the SBISD program director will have many more sites and personnel for whom to be responsible.

A timeline was laid out for weekly visits initially, and then monthly meetings, with weekly conference and/or video calls throughout the grant period. Details were vague for collecting information from principals and teachers, but these meetings will be used to discuss the progress of the program and adjustments that may need to be made.

Disseminating information was planned only through quarterly brief project reports and conference presentations.

Post grant review was not addressed.

The lack of detail for monitoring and sharing information led to the point value assigned.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Timelines were laid out for communication expectations between key personnel in the consortium. It was pointed out that communication will be of great importance due to the geographic layout of the cooperating schools in the consortium. The narrative suggests that communication may take the form of conference and/or video calls due to the distance between the key personnel. Communication with, and obtaining feedback from, external stakeholders was discussed briefly as being important, but was only addressed in the semi-annual section of the timeline. Little detail was provided to explain how engagement with the external stakeholders would be facilitated.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This application was written referencing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards, which are used in Texas instead of Common Core State Standards, and the STAAR testing program, but also referenced using norm-referenced testing to measure student progress toward high academic national standards, which were not named or identified.

The goals laid out were not necessarily ambitious. One example was the 2nd grade norm referenced test results. The goal listed is to increase the math scores by 20% of students scoring at the 50%ile or above, but the reading by only 15% and the science by 14%. However, the baseline shows that the students are already doing much better in math than in reading or science, so it would seem ambitious to target the reading and science for larger growth.

A second example was the completion of the FAFSA forms, which is currently at 29% of seniors. The goal in four years is set at only 54%, but the stated goal for having students attend college is over 70%.

The required measures of increasing students by subgroup being served by effective and highly effective principals and teachers cannot be assessed as ambitious or achievable since the measurement has not yet been fully developed or implemented.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative stated that each LEA in the consortium has experience managing and evaluating large, multi-year projects. The data to be collected in order to evaluate the projects included in the grant proposal was grouped by qualitative and quantitative measures. While the consortium's plans include a wide range of assessment data, no explanation is given about how the data will be analyzed and acted upon. The balance between the detail in the assessment measures and the lack of detail given about how to analyze and make decisions/recommendations with the information led to the point value awarded.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget summary shows no other funds used to support the project, but stated that local, state, federal and private funding sources will undergird the plan.

The budget appears to be disproportionately distributed to the KIPP LEAs, although the number of participating students in these LEAs is much lower than the number of students in SBISD. No explanation is provided for this disparity.

The summary table does show decreasing amounts of funding over the four years, supporting the explanation of start up costs at the beginning and operational costs continuing, and perhaps district support of the projects, although these were not clearly labeled.

The proposal did not include plans for funding grant sustainability after the grant period.

Balancing the overall positive aspects of the proposed budget with the inconsistencies noted regarding additional funds and the lack of attention to funding activities for sustainability of the personalized learning let to the point value assigned.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal included a discussion of the importance of sustaining the progress made during the project. The details given for the sustainability of the project financially are vague, naming district funds, philanthropic donations and business support, but are not listed with dollar amounts. No specific information about the commitment or feasibility of these funding sources is provided.

No high quality plan was included for this section outlining the specific goals, activities, deliverables, timelines or responsible parties to assure sustainability of the progress made.

The point value awarded was based on the lack of a high-quality plan as well as the lack of a detailed budget to support the commitment to sustaining the progress that will have been made during the project implementation.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**7**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The partnerships identified include the one between the KIPP LEA in Houston and the SBISD and one with *Communities in Schools*.

The existing relationship between SBISD and KIPP LEA Houston has already been developed and is at the heart of this proposal. The emphasis of the partnership for the competitive preference priority is that the KIPP LEAs will share their expertise with SBISD regarding the development of a mentoring program for their students using successful alumni.

The partnership with *Communities in Schools* is to provide social and emotional support for students as they progress through school, and head to post-secondary education.

No differentiation is made in the plan to target or give priority for these services to schools with the most high need students. All students are included as participating students.

The proposal outlined two major partnerships, as well as additional partners used in parts of the application activities (American Graduate, America's Promise Alliance, Corporation for National and Community Service, and United Negro College Fund). Detail was lacking regarding how these partnerships would be implemented in all schools to be able to expand the effect of the program activities.

The detail lacking in this plan led to the point score awarded.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The five components of the plan laid out a broad vision for improving education for participating students and was discussed coherently and comprehensively throughout the grant proposal.

Total	**210**	**120**